The Kindergarten

as an

Influence in Modern Civilization

Elizabeth Harrison

THE KINDERGARTEN

As an Influence in Modern Civilization.

BY

ELIZABETH HARRISON.

OPENING LECTURE BEFORE THE MOTHER'S DEPARTMENT OF THE
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AS AN INFLUENCE IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.

Coming fresh from the Old World, after a summer spent in conference and consultation with some of its best thinkers and bravest workers in the educational field, I am inclined to study civilization more as a whole than to dwell upon our particular phase of it.

If we would know where we stand, and the real value of what we are doing, we must have some definite knowledge of what has gone before, of how the world has advanced out of barbarism into its present semi-civilization, for we stand as yet upon the borderland of *things which are to be.*

Every broken tower and tumble down wall of feudal castle, every great picture gallery, with its thousands of pictures dating from the early drawings of the catacombs down to the modern landscape painters, every grandly majestic, though now nearly deserted cathedral, are each and all but letters, fragments of sentences, from the time-stained pages of

the history of civilization. They are steps all of them, but steps to what? Beautiful and full of interest as they are, their chief value to the thinker lies in tracing the tendencies indicated by them.

We cannot understand the present without some knowledge of the past. Civilization has its evolution as self-evident as is the evolution declared by science. If the effort of the earnest soul is to count for much, it must stop now and then, to ask the questions,—Out of what have we grown? What are we now doing? What does this present line of work mean for the future? In all provinces of the world's activity this question should be asked, but most emphatically is it needed in the field of education. Unless we can understand the evolution of educational thought we cannot rightly value the efforts of to-day; we cannot wisely distinguish between the incidentals and the essentials of our work. Education is no longer considered a process by means of which facts may be accumulated, but all thoughtful teachers now look upon it as *a preparation for life*. Knowledge, no matter of what kind, is, in reality, a tool or instrument put into the hand of the youth or maiden in order that he or she may obtain mastery over the affairs

of life, and enter the more easily into the great realm of spiritual living. Of course, there are necessarily conflicting opinions as to what tools are of the most importance in equipping the young for life's struggles but to the large majority of thinking educators the school days of a child are but a means, not an end. A close connection is now shown to exist between the training which teaches a child to think rationally or irrationally, and the thinking which he does in after life. The world is awakening to the realization that what we lead the child to be interested in during childhood and youth, has a preponderating influence on his pursuits in after life. As we have come face to face with the fact that not only the muscles of the body which are used in early life become the strong muscles of the man or woman, so too the tendencies of mind and heart created at this period become the marked tendencies in after life. Such a view of education is necessarily changing many of the opinions formerly held as to the importance of certain branches of study.

Again in the field of philanthropy, the wisest reformers are beginning to plead, not so much for assistance in helping this or that case of

need, but for aid in checking the sources of the evil. The hungry must still be fed, the sick visited, and the homeless sheltered, but the friend of humanity, who thinks as well as loves, no longer stops with these much-needed services. He asks, "*Why* is there so much poverty in this land of plenty?" "*Why* has intemperance so strong a hold upon noble and generous natures?" "Why does the disease of gambling eat cancer-like into the very heart of honor and uprightness?" "How can we save our ignorant girls from ruin?" "How can we build up a pure manhood in the hearts of our boys?" Such questions indicate that there is a fast growing realization of a close connection between some hidden cause and the constantly recurring manifestation of these evils.

Again, in the world of religion, we feel that the vital relationship between the creed professed and the life lived, is being pressed closer and closer home to our consciences. A significant story is told of an argument which once took place between a Greek bishop and an American clergyman at Constantinople. After having spent some time in a controversy concerning their distinctive creeds the American clergyman threw out some allusion

to certain dissolute habits of the Eastern bishop. In a moment the prelate was furiously angry. Throwing upon the table the roll of manuscript which he held in his hand he exclaimed, "That, sir, is my creed, you have to do with that alone; it is without flaw from first to last. With my life, sir, you have nothing whatever to do."

Little by little this close and logical connection of cause and effect, effect and cause is compelling us to admit that we cannot consistently pray, "OurFather, who art in heaven" without admitting that the words include an acknowledgment of the fact that we have brothers and sisters here below. If God is our Father then man is our brother and should be treated accordingly. There is no escaping this conclusion.

In whatever direction we may look whether it be the field of the world's material activities, into the realm of its intellectual forces, into the depth of its spiritual struggles we are beginning to see everywhere the great law of continuity at work. The dawning realization of this great law is beginning already to work important changes in every direction. What will be the result when each child is trained to see it and to rejoice in it, as fully as he now knows and delights in the sunshine. *This is*

the great central truth of the kindergarten. Its chief aim is to develop by means of work and play, of song and story, of plant and picture the opening mind to feel, to know, to love, to reverence and obey this mightiest law in life. Froebel calls it, "The Unity of Life." All through his writings we find him urging this great thought upon the mother and kindergartner. In recent conversations with his immediate disciples and personal friends, I find they all agree that this was his central thought, the unity of life, the law of continuity, how to teach the child from the beginning of his existence to realize that all things are connected, how to lead him to this vital truth from his own observation of his pot of plants or garden-bed, that his flowers droop and fade if they are not watered, that his blocks tumble down if they are not built up solidly, that each child must stand on the line to make the perfect circle. By the constantly recurring experiences of his little life he is led to know that all effects have a cause and to accept this fact as a matter of course. Again, in his logically planned hand work he learns to know that points joined together make lines; that lines multiplied make surfaces; that surfaces repeated make solids.

Thus through every fact in the material world, through every experiment which his own small hands make, he learns that there are no isolations in the world, until, little by little, there grows up within him, not only a philosophic and rational view of his own life, but also the deep and abiding realization that if there is a God in the universe there must be some connection between his divine nature and us; that there must be some spark of that divine within each human soul, else there can be no real connection between the spirit of God and the spirit of man, and the law of continuity manifested in all other things in creation is here violated. Thus the great truth declared in the opening pages of revelation that, "God made man in his own image" is reaffirmed by this philosophic argument. If this deep and significant thought were clearly grasped, and what it means for the future activities and aspirations of man there would be no further questioning as to the claims of the kindergarten to be an essential part of the world's advancing civilization.

Let us remember that we are to train the child from the first years of his life, through his every activity, with that great truth in mind. It is to this work that you, as students of the

kindergarten system, have come; first to prepare yourselves and then to prepare the little children intrusted to you. Yon are to look upon all life as an opportunity for the development of the divine side of man, proved by the law of continuity as well as declared by the scriptures.

Let us open wide every window of the soul that divine grace may pour in and flood with its resplendent light the humblest worker, the most obscure life among us, so that the most common-place drudgery of our homes or our kindergartens becomes a grand and helpful work, because it is a factor in the upbuilding of man's highest nature. As this thought is deepened by our daily experiences we realize more and more what an influence the kindergarten is in our advancing civilization.

BOOKS AND BOOKLETS

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CHICAGO KINDERGARTEN COLLEGE.

A STUDY OF CHILD NATURE. By Elizabeth Harrison. The book is printed on laid paper, neatly bound in cloth, with gilt top. Price $1.00 net.

THE VISION OF DANTE. By Elizabeth Harrison. Illustrated by Walter Crane. A story for children. This book is printed on Windsor hand-made paper, beautifully bound. Price $2.50 net.

SERIES No. 1.

THE LIFE OF FRIEDRICH WILHELM FROBEL. By Frau Frobel. Price 25 cents.

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THE VALUE OF THE KINDERGARTEN STUDY. By Elizabeth Harrison. Delivered Oct. 1, 1890. The opening lecture of a three years' course for mothers, in connection with the Mother's Department of the Chicago Kindergarten College. Price 25 cents.

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Special Discounts to the Trade, Schools and Sunday Schools.

All orders should be sent to the Chicago Kindergarten College, 10 Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill., or to leading booksellers.

PRESS NOTICES

OF

"CHILD NATURE," BY ELIZABETH HARRISON.

This book might be characterized as an illumined text of Froebel's thought. The lectures show a mental grasp which is truly remarkable.—CHICAGO INTER OCEAN.

The whole book is so valuable an aid to either mothers or teachers that we wish every training school in the land might be in possession of the thoughts it contains.—FRIENDS INTELLIGENCER AND JOURNAL, Philadelphia.

This modest little book is full of deep insight and helpful suggestions. It is at once simple and philosophical.—DENVER TIMES.

Every aspiring teacher and earnest mother would seek to possess this little book if she knew how much of help and inspiration it contains.—PUBLIC SCHOOL JOURNAL, Bloomington, Ill.

The book is invaluable.—AMERICAN FARMER.

It is no ordinary work, but one which should be read over and over again. Miss Harrison has made the subject a profound and successful study for many years.—DEMOCRAT, Davenport, Iowa.

All mothers who read the book, even though they know nothing of Froebel, will find there practical and truly philosophical thoughts of great helpfulness to them, as they strive to develop their children in the best way, physically, mentally and morally. We are sure that all thoughtful persons will arise from the reading of this book with a conviction that there is a real "science of motherhood." We most heartily wish that this little book of Miss Harrison's might find a place in every home, and that Christian kindergartens might be established in every part of the land.—THE STANDARD, Chicago.

We have come to the conclusion after reading this excellent book that the mother is father to the man, rather than the father. * * * * This book is a valuable contribution to the study of children, and deserves a place by the side of *Preyer* and *Perez*.—SCHOOL JOURNAL, New York.

The author has had large experience in the education of the very young, and is in full sympathy with the most advanced educational views.—N. Y. TRIBUNE.

The volume is an admirable study of the art of training children, and of the means and methods the parent or teacher possesses of approaching and touching the springs of motive. The moral and religious ideas of the book are sound.—THE INDEPENDENCE, N. Y.

If every woman could be led to take instruction from this publication, there would be fewer weary hands and heads among the mothers of America. Especially helpful and interesting are the chapters devoted to the training of the muscles, affections, the will, and that upon right and wrong punishments.—BEE, Omaha, Neb.

One of the most helpful and intelligent books which has appeared, touching the training of young children. * * * The chapters which make up this volume were given as talks to mothers and teachers. They have, therefore, a directness of statement and a practical turn at every stage, which they might have missed had they been addressed to an imaginary, instead of a real audience.—CHRISTIAN UNION, New York.

The book is at once profound and popular, systematically arranged, and enlivened with illustrative anecdote, drawn from her own large experience with all phases of child character. Her book shows not only an ample acquaintance with life, but also with literature as well. The author claims that the study of child culture should be placed upon the broad basis of a science, and her book demonstrates the justice of her claim. SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES, Philadelphia.

Miss Willard writes:—It is the ablest work on the most significant subject that has yet come to my table. It is truly philosophical. * * * * I remember with what eagerness mother was wont to read and study every book that came into her hands relative to the training of children, but she never had a book like this, and, much as I owe to her, I can but think it would have been better for me if one so earnest as she was, had known by heart, as she surely would have done, had it come under her observation, the 207 pages of this marvelous little treatise.—UNION SIGNAL, Chicago. Ill.

THE VISION OF DANTE

A Story for Little Children and a Talk for Their Mothers.

By Elizabeth Harrison.

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER CRANE.

"THE VISION OF DANTE" is a story of Dante's vision told to children by that queen of story tellers, Elizabeth Harrison, Principal of the Chicago Kindergarten College.

It is a most valuable addition to Dante literature—for a whole literature has grown up as the centuries have passed, since that great world genius passed to the higher life, more than six hundred years ago.

Great scholars have written and philosophized and speculated upon the *Divine Comedy* all these ages, throwing scarce a ray of light upon the poem, which is a veiled book to the million; but here in Chicago a woman has told a story to little children, and lo! the whole is bathed in a soft light that reveals the purpose of the poem, and at her call the "buried secret" comes forth from the Tomb this Easter Tide, to tell us as always the one truth that "Love is the fulfilling of the Law."

This book is beautifully illustrated by Walter Crane.

—*The Parthenon.*

"The destiny of nations lies in the hands of women."

—FRIEDRICH FROEBEL.

Chicago Kindergarten College

FOR MOTHERS, TEACHERS AND NURSES.

Mrs. J. N. Crouse, Director. Elizabeth Harrison, Principal.

The work of the College is divided into the following departments:

TEACHERS' DEPARTMENT

Central Classes—Freshmen, Junior, Senior, Normal.
Branch Classes.

MOTHERS' DEPARTMENT

Central Classes. Local Branch Classes.
Distant Branch Classes.

NURSES' DEPARTMENT

LITERARY DEPARTMENT

PHILANTHROPIC DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL LECTURE COURSES

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT

In the Teachers' Department the work of the Central Classes includes the three years' course, which is supplemented by a district Normal course for those who desire to fit themselves for Training Teachers. Branch classes include a one year's course.

The Mothers' Department also includes a three years' course, and is composed of three classes,

The Literary Department includes lectures on Great Literature and studies in the same. These lectures and studies lead up to and culminate each year in a Literary School, which consists of ten lectures given by the most eminent scholars in literature.

College Re-opens October 3, 1893.

Organized under the name of Kindergarten Training Class in 1885.
Re-organized under the name of Chicago Kindergarten College in 1890.

Registration in 1885.		Registration in 1892-3.	
Teachers . . .	5	Teachers . . .	104
Mothers . . .	2	Mothers . . .	453
Total .	7	Total .	557

Total No. Students enrolled, 465
Total No. Mothers enrolled, 2,522
} Total Registration 2,987

Kindergartens supervised by the College in1892-1893. 47

For Curriculums and Application Blanks, address

Chicago Kindergarten College,

10 Van Buren St.,

CHICAGO, ILL.